



## Economic & International Development Department

### HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

#### FIRST FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CITY 1 BUILDING, 300 N. CAMPBELL STREET

JULY 6, 2015, 4:00 P.M.

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The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in the First Floor Council Chambers, City 1 Building, 300 N. Campbell Street, July 6, 2015, 4:00 p.m.

The following commissioners were present:

Chairman William Helm

Commissioner Beatriz Lucero

Commissioner Randy Brock

Commissioner Cesar Gomez

Commissioner George Cordova

Commissioner Melinda Becker Skillern

The following City staff members were present:

Ms. Providencia Velázquez, Historic Preservation Officer, Economic & International Development

Mr. Adam Train, Planner, Historic Preservation Office, Economic & International Development

Ms. Kristen Hamilton-Karam, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office

Ms. Jessica Herrera, Redevelopment Manager, Economic & International Development

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Helm called the meeting to order at 4:23 p.m., quorum present.

#### CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

*Ms. Velázquez requested moving agenda item 8. to the forefront of the agenda:*

8. Discussion on Downtown survey and map (per 11.24.2014 meeting discussion) including discussion of Certified Local Government (CLG) grant.

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Gomez AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE ITEM 8. TO ITEM 1. ON THE AGENDA.*

#### **I. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – PUBLIC COMMENT**

*None.*

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## II. REGULAR AGENDA – DISCUSSION AND ACTION

### Certificate of Appropriateness

*The following item was discussed immediately following item 8.*

1. **PHAP15-00020:** Being 100 Government Hill 21 & 22 & S 15 ft of 20, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Location:                | 4501 Cumberland Avenue  |
| Historic District:       | Austin Terrace  |
| Property Owner:          | David Pagliasotti   |
| Representative:          | Roy Gallego   |
| Representative District: | 2   |
| Existing Zoning:         | R-4/H (Residential/Historic)  |
| Year Built:              | 1957  |
| Historic Status:         | Contributing  |
| Request:                 | Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of existing casement windows with vinyl fixed and slider windows, the modification of windows into doors, the replacement of jalousie windows with single-hung windows, the modification of doors into windows, the construction of window openings to accommodate slider windows, door replacement, and replacement of damaged wood shake siding with painted cementitious siding |
| Application Filed:       | 6/22/15   |
| 45 Day Expiration:       | 8/6/15  |

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of existing casement windows with vinyl fixed and slider windows, the modification of windows into doors, the replacement of jalousie windows with single-hung windows, the modification of doors into windows, the construction of window openings to accommodate slider windows, door replacement, and replacement of damaged wood shake siding with painted cementitious siding.

The Historic Preservation Office recommends **\*APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATIONS** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

*The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:*

- *Doors and windows are considered important character-defining features because of significant detailing*
- *When windows are involved in the construction process it is recommended to repair rather than replace.*



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- Do not use single pane picture windows or horizontal sliding windows if they are not the original window types.
- Installation of windows similar to the original in appearance and structural purpose, regardless of construction materials is permitted.
- Windows in secondary façades shall be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- The size of the door or window opening should not be altered.
- When repair is not feasible, door and window products will be reviewed on an individual basis using the following criteria:
  - a. Architectural and historical compatibility
  - b. Comparison to original profile
  - c. Level of significance of original doors and windows to the architectural style of the building.
  - d. Three dimensional exterior applied muntins that simulate or match the original muntins may be approved. Single dimension interior applied muntins are not appropriate.
- As with masonry, original wood finishes should be maintained where at all possible.
- If areas are deteriorated beyond repair they should be replaced in kind to match the original historic material compounds. Aluminum, vinyl, plywood or other synthetic sidings shall be reviewed by the HLC. However, some may be considered on an individual basis if fake wood grains are not used, the proposed material matches the existing historic material, all original detailing is left exposed, window and door trim are not covered, and any unique finishes are intact and not covered or damaged.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:

- The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

**\*THE MODIFICATIONS ARE THAT THE REPLACEMENT WINDOWS LABELED A, C, D, AND Z BE CASEMENT WINDOWS TO MATCH THE EXISTING AND THAT THE WOOD SIDING BE REPLACED WITH WOOD TO MATCH THE EXISTING.**

Ms. Velázquez explained she proposes replacing the windows, facing the main façade, in-kind. As a compromise, she proposed to commissioners:

1. Approve vinyl sliders for the remaining windows; and
2. Approve the replacement of the windows into doors and the doors into windows.



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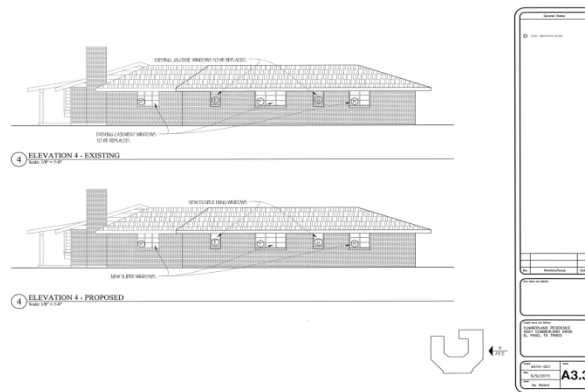
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Mr. Roy Gallego, representing the property owner, explained the property owner would like to leave the wood shake siding as is. Additionally, for safety purposes, the property owner is proposing the window in the children's bedroom, window "D", be ingress, slider window rather than casement.



Chairman Helm requested confirmation from Mr. Gallego that the two primary windows facing the street will be three-dimensional, exterior applied muntins slider windows.

Mr. Gallego agreed.

Commissioner Gomez asked if Mr. Gallego was required to bring in a sample for approval.

Ms. Velázquez explained should commissioners approve the request the plans would have to be revised prior to issuance of any permits. She requested commissioners require submittal of a cut sheet of the windows.

Mr. Gallego noted the application included a request to replace the existing roof.

Ms. Velázquez stated she would approve the roof replacement administratively with one for one, asphalt shingles. The recommendation for the wood shake siding is for wood shake to match the existing.

With regard to the wood shake, per staff recommendation, Chairman Helm suggested commissioners allow the option to replace with one for one matching siding or a cementitious to match wood shake style.

### MOTION:

*Motion made by Commissioner Gomez TO APPROVE WITH THE RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION BY STAFF THAT WINDOW "D" TO BE A SLIDER WINDOW WITH EXTERIOR APPLIED MUNTINS.*

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Ms. Velázquez asked Commissioner Gomez if the motion was exterior applied muntins for all windows. She explained the windows in the rear façade would not be visible.

Chairman Helm requested commissioners approve three dimensional, exterior applied muntins on window "D", at a minimum. Regarding the wood shake siding, he requested commissioners approve as recommended by Ms. Velázquez or not at all.

**MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Gomez, seconded by Commissioner Cordova TO APPROVE AS RECOMMENDED BY STAFF EXCEPT THAT WINDOW "D" BE A SLIDER WINDOW WITH THREE DIMENSIONAL EXTERIOR APPLIED MUNTINS.*

<b>2. PHAP15-00021:</b>	Being 7 Sunset Heights 56 To 59, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
Location:	1100 Los Angeles Drive
Historic District:	Sunset Heights
Property Owner:	Robert and Amy O'Rourke
Representative:	Alberto Alcantar
Representative District:	8
Existing Zoning:	R-2/H (Residential/Historic)
Year Built:	1904
Historic Status:	Landmark
Request:	Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition and reconstruction of an addition and the modification of a window opening into a door
Application Filed:	6/22/15
45 Day Expiration:	8/6/15

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition and reconstruction of an addition and the modification of a window opening into a door. The proposed new addition will be one-story, slightly taller than the existing addition; it will have a flat roof and will not be visible from the street. Furthermore, the proposed new addition will have three rooms, one of which will be a bathroom.

The Historic Preservation Office recommends **APPROVAL** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

*The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:*

- *Introduce additions in locations that are not visible from the street-generally on rear elevations.*
- *Locate additions carefully so they do not damage or conceal significant building features or details.*
- *Design an addition so it is compatible in roof form, proportions, materials and details with the*





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*existing structure.*

- *Design an addition that is compatible with but subtly different from existing historic homes in the district.*
- *Design an addition so that if removed in the future, the historic building's form and character defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.*
- *Doors and windows are considered important character-defining features because of significant detailing.*
- *Windows in secondary façades shall be reviewed on a case by case basis.*
- *Retain and preserve the pattern, arrangement, and dimensions of door and window openings on principal elevations. Often the placement of doors and windows is an indicator of a particular architectural style, and therefore contributes to the building's significance. Doors and windows for new construction and additions should be compatible in proportion, location, shape, pattern, size, and details to existing units.*
- *When repair is not feasible, door and window products will be reviewed on an individual basis using the following criteria:*
  - a. *Architectural and historical compatibility*
  - b. *Comparison to original profile*
  - c. *Level of significance of original doors and windows to the architectural style of the building.*
  - d. *Three dimensional exterior applied muntins that simulate or match the original muntins may be approved. Single dimension interior applied muntins are not appropriate.*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:*

- *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

Chairman Helm referred to the following staff recommendations:

- *Design an addition so it is compatible in roof form, proportions, materials and details with the existing structure.*
- *Design an addition that is compatible with but subtly different from existing historic homes in the district.*
- *Design an addition so that if removed in the future, the historic building's form and character defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.*

Per the submitted plans, Chairman Helm felt the proposed addition did not distinguish itself quite enough from the original construction. He suggested setting the addition back six inches or so, just enough to create a shadow line. Personally, Chairman Helm thought the proposed window and door pattern was an improvement over the existing.

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Ms. Amy O'Rourke, property owner, she was open to suggestions from staff and commissioners. She noted due to a gutter and the electrical panel there was no space to move the addition to the east.

**MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Cordova TO ACCEPT THE APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED WITH THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHAIR.*

**MOTION RESTATED:**

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Gomez AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ACCEPT STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUEST TO OFFSET THE ADDITION SEVERAL INCHES FROM THE CORNER.*

<b>3. PHAP15-00022:</b>	Being 16 Sunset Heights 6 & 7, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
Location:	1119 Los Angeles Drive
Historic District:	Sunset Heights
Property Owner:	Rene Baz
Representative:	David Holguin
Representative District:	8
Existing Zoning:	A-3/H (Apartments/Historic)
Year Built:	1901
Historic Status:	Contributing
Request:	Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition and replacement of the roof, brick and lintels
Application Filed:	6/24/15
45 Day Expiration:	8/8/15

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition and replacement of the roof, brick and lintels. Several months ago, the application for roof removal and replacement was submitted and administratively approved. During the demolition phase, the roof literally came apart and the home started to collapse. Thankfully, no one was hurt. For safety purposes, the property has been sealed off and the property owner has relocated elsewhere. The bricks at the roofline are falling and the lintels are coming apart.

Chairman Helm clarified so when the rafters gave way and pushed the exterior wall out brick-by-brick.



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Ms. Velázquez concurred and explained the request has come before commissioners to approve or deny the issuance of a structural permit for the exterior. She clarified the owner will be installing a new roof which *includes the installation of the eaves*. The request includes maintaining/repairing the existing windows, replacing the brick to match the existing 1904 brick and replacing the roof.

The Historic Preservation Office recommends **\*APPROVAL WITH A MODIFICATION** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

*The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:*

- *The distinctive features of each roof type should be retained as they are character-defining elements.*
- *If a roof requires repair, the replacement materials must match the original or existing materials as closely as possible. Do not change the style or construction of the roof.*
- *If it is necessary to replace masonry, always use materials that match the color, size and texture of the masonry being replaced.*
- *Preserve the shape, size, materials, and details of character-defining chimneys and foundations and other masonry/stone features.*
- *Maintain the integrity of masonry/stone features by re-laying loose bricks or stones and repairing deteriorating mortar joints as necessary. Match original brick coursing. When re-pointing or tuck pointing masonry surfaces, match the dimension, composition, color, texture, profile, and design of the old mortar joints as closely as possible.*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:*

- *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
- *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

**\*THE MODIFICATION IS THAT THE ROOF BE REPLACED TO MATCH THE HISTORIC ROOF AND WILL INCLUDE THE EAVES AND DETAILS.**

Mr. David Holguin, owner, EPG Planning Consultants, representing the property owner, gave background information regarding the cause of the structural collapse. Regarding the roof structure, Mr. Holguin requested the use of trusses, same spacing, 2' x 6' framing rather than the original 2' x 4'; additionally, the originals lintels would be reinstalled. He noted that all usable brick was cleaned up and would be reinstalled and any non-usable bricks will be replaced with bricks as close to the original size and texture as possible.





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### MOTION:

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Brock AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS THAT THE OWNER USE THE TRUSS SYSTEM, WITH THE SAME SPACING AS THE ORIGINAL RAFTERS, SO LONG AS THE EXPOSED DECKING WILL REPLICATE THE ORIGINAL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.*

4. **PHAP15-00023:** Being 5 Manhattan Heights 11 & 12, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Location:                | 2818 Lebanon Avenue  |
| Historic District:       | Manhattan Heights  |
| Property Owner:          | Homer Varela   |
| Representative:          | Homer Varela   |
| Representative District: | 2  |
| Existing Zoning:         | R-3/H (Residential/Historic)   |
| Year Built:              | 1918   |
| Historic Status:         | Contributing   |
| Request:                 | Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of chain link fencing after-the-fact |
| Application Filed:       | 6/29/15  |
| 45 Day Expiration:       | 8/13/15  |

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of chain link fencing after-the-fact. Photos of the property during the last survey and Google Earth photo were displayed with special attention noted on the carport. Approximately two weeks ago, the property owner met with Ms. Velázquez to discuss requirements to divide the shared carport/driveway. The property owner will be selling the property and the mortgage company is requesting he divide (two separate roofs) the carport into two structures.

To divide the carport structure, Ms. Velázquez explained to the property owner that according to the Zoning Ordinance, he would have to cut the existing structure in two. The structural supports running down the center would have to be brought in two feet from the property line and finally, a masonry wall would have to be erected separating the carport/driveway. As the property is located in a historic district, Ms. Velázquez offered to speak to the mortgage company on behalf of the property owner and perhaps propose other solutions.



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The property owner met with staff at the One Stop Shop one week prior to meeting with Ms. Velázquez. Office hours for the Economic & International Development Department and Planning & Inspections staff are Mondays through Thursdays, 7:00am to 6:00pm, and closed Fridays. Office hours for the One Stop Shop are Mondays through Thursday, 7:00am to 6:00pm and Fridays from 8:00am to 12:00pm.

The property owner spoke to One Stop Shop staff regarding the requirements for the installation of a chain link fence. Staff informed the property owner a permit was not required to install the chain link fence.

Ms. Velázquez received a phone call from a neighbor explaining the property owner was installing a chain link fence. She explained that, although the installation of a chain link fence does not require a permit, it does require the approval from the Historic Preservation Office.

Immediately, after receiving the phone call from the neighbor Ms. Velázquez telephoned the property owner and apologized profusely regarding the breakdown in communication and then explained the requirements for the installation of a chain link fence in a historic district. She then requested the property owner cease and desist any further installation of the fence. However, when she visited the site after her conversation with him, she found that the fence installation had been completed.

The Historic Preservation Office recommends **\*APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATIONS** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

*The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:*

- *Construction of new fences, stairs, or sidewalk rails and replacement of older existing fences is allowed on historic properties provided that the proposed site feature is of a compatible material and scale.*
- *Rock, brick, wood and wrought iron are acceptable materials but each case is decided individually. Cinder block and chain link fencing are relatively recent developments and are therefore not appropriate fencing materials.*
- *Solid walls are appropriate for the side property lines while an open fencing material is more appropriate for the front portion of the property.*
- *Introduce new fences and walls compatible in material, design, scale, location, and size with original fences and walls in the historic district.*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:*

- *The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*



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*\*THE MODIFICATIONS ARE THAT THE OWNER PROVIDE WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE MORTGAGE COMPANY EXPLAINING WHY THE SEPARATION IS REQUIRED, THAT THE FENCING IN THE DRIVEWAY BE REMOVED, AND THE FENCING UNDER THE CARPORT BE CAMOUFLAGED WITH WOOD.*

Regarding her recommendation, Ms. Velázquez clarified the fencing under the carport would be camouflaged with wood panels attached to the chain link fencing.

Mr. Homer Varela, co-property owner, explained the property has been in the family for approximately 40 years. In the past, upgrades and improvements for the property have always gone through the Historic Landmark Commission. The property has been sold; however, the lending company would not extend the mortgage if there are shared assets. Mr. Varela questioned this request with the lending company. On June 17<sup>th</sup>, he received an email from the lending company that stated the carport could remain only if there was a way to separate the carport from the adjacent property owner. Later, Mr. Varela received another email stating the underwriter was very clear; the carport is to be removed and a fence is to be installed and the survey and appraisal must be redone. The new buyer is insisting the carport remain as it currently exists; therefore, the lending company provided a joint agreement relating to the existing shared driveway and carport. The joint agreement, a binding covenant, is a maintenance agreement between the buyer and the existing property owner of the adjacent property. Both property owners must maintain their side of the properties; both property owners have signed the joint agreement. Per the lending company, the carport can remain; however, the chain link fencing will also remain.

Mr. Varela stated chain link fencing is a material that is consistent throughout Manhattan Heights Historic District; furthermore, he found 26 properties with existing chain link fencing. He asked commissioners to approve the property as it currently exists. The agreement requested the fencing be installed to separate the full driveways. Mr. Varela hired an engineer to mark the property line for the driveway; the chain link fencing was installed two inches within his side of the property line.

Chairman Helm and Commissioners Becker Skillern and Lucero commented. As part of the comments, it was stated that the mortgage company does not create the rules of the City of El Paso's historic districts; therefore, the mortgage company does not have the right to demand that the guidelines be ignored.

After a very extensive process, Ms. Velázquez explained, the current historic preservation guidelines were approved January 2013. Staff met with various historic district groups and asked for their input regarding what would they like to see in their neighborhoods, what they would not like to see in their neighborhoods, what construction material types are appropriate and/or inappropriate. Chain link fencing was considered inappropriate. These 26 properties with existing chain link fencing most likely pre-date 2013. Perhaps, because of these 26 properties, individuals concluded chain link fencing was an inappropriate material for historic

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districts.

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Lucero AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS OFFERED BY STAFF THAT THE FENCING IN THE DRIVEWAY BE REMOVED, FENCING UNDER THE CARPORT CAN BE CAMOUFLAGED WITH WOOD, AND THAT THOSE MODIFICATIONS TAKE PLACE ON OR BEFORE JULY 20, 2015.*

5. Addresses of property HLC commissioners have requested that HLC staff review or investigate and provide a report to the HLC. If no addresses are submitted in advance and listed under this agenda item, commissioners may announce such addresses under this agenda item. Discussion on property announced at this meeting will take place during the next regularly scheduled meeting. July 6, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the July 20, 2015 meeting. July 20, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be schedule for the August 3, 2015 meeting.

*No requests from commissioners or staff.*

#### **HLC Staff Report**

6. Update on Administrative Review Cases since the last HLC meeting for the properties listed on the attachment posted with this agenda. (See Attachment "A")

*No comments from commissioners.*

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Commissioner Becker Skillern AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE HLC STAFF REPORT.*

#### **Other Business – Discussion and Action**

7. Presentation by the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso (HACEP) regarding new construction at the Tays Housing Complex

Mr. Richard Seges, Chief Real Estate Officer, Housing Authority of El Paso (HACEP) gave a presentation and explained the current five building structures containing 81 units would be demolished and replaced with four buildings containing 198 units. The adverse effect will be the demolition of these five historically significant buildings. The mitigation plan is to erect a prominent public monument, location yet to be decided, on the site to commemorate the historical significance of this property. The historical significance is that this was the original site of the military post named Fort Bliss in 1854 that was destroyed in a flood 14 years later. Subsequently, this military post was home for the African-American regiment, the Buffalo Soldiers. In the 1940s, the Tays Housing Complex provided segregated housing for African-Americans.



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Tommy Gonzalez

Chairman Helm asked Mr. Edward Gill if the Texas Historical Commission had reviewed the demolition request.

Mr. Edward Gill, Director of Construction, HACEP, replied he met personally with members of the Texas Historical Commission and walked the site with them. The written opinion from the Texas Historic Commission was that the five buildings were eligible properties for demolition.

Ms. Veronica Soto, Director, Community and Human Development, clarified:

1. The project will receive federal funds, including the \$100,000 HOME funding. To receive any federal funding, that the City controls, an environmental review must be conducted to include a historic review.
2. Due to the age of the structures, the project was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission for review. The Texas Historical Commission found the project has an adverse effect due to the cultural significance of these structures as the only public housing where African-American peoples could live in the 1940s.
3. Therefore, the Texas Historical Commission requested the City of El Paso, the HACEP and the Texas Historical Commission enter into a mitigation plan. The purpose of this presentation is to share with the Historic Landmark Commission this mitigation plan. The City of El Paso, the HACEP and the El Paso County Historic Commission met for public meetings to obtain public comment.

Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez why the request was not for a Certificate of Appropriateness. He wondered if commissioners should take action on the matter.

Ms. Velázquez suggested commissioners make a recommendation. She noted these structures are not designated historic by the city, state, or federal government; they do not have an H-overlay on them. This explains why the request was not presented as a Certificate of Appropriateness, which explains why the HACEP did not have to consult with the Historic Preservation Officer. However, when using federal funds on properties that are 45 years or older, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) conducts a Section 106 review for any historical, architectural or cultural significance. In the course of the SHPO's review, it was discovered that these five structures were designated for African-American families. The SHPO then halted activities and personally came to El Paso to visit the site and determined that they believed the demolition of these structures would create an adverse effect. As part of the mitigation plan, the SHPO requested the Historic Landmark Commission's opinion.





## Economic & International Development Department

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Commissioner Lucero questioned, through the course of the public meetings, was there any opposition to the demolition request.

Mr. Seges responded there was no opposition.

Chairman Helm asked if there would be a public art component for this project.

Ms. Soto replied no, this is a HACEP project, other than the \$100,000 HOME funding and City of El Paso money.

Chairman Helm asked what EPFC funding was.

Mr. Gerald Cichon, Director, HACEP, replied El Paso Finance Commission.

Chairman Helm stated it was important to create a significant prominent public monument and suggested HACEP consider making the City of El Paso's public art process a part of the creation of that significant prominent public monument. He thought it would be appropriate to bring in individuals who have/had a vested interest in commemorating what occurred on the property part of the process in creating the monument.

Ms. Kristen Hamilton-Karam explained this was not city property and the public art funds are for projects located on the city projects on city property.

Mr. Cichon respectfully requested polling vote or a motion from commissioners in favor or in opposition to the request.

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Becker Skillern, seconded by Commissioner Cordova AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO MAKE A VOTE OF SUPPORT FOR THIS PROJECT.*

#### **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

*Ms. Velázquez requested moving agenda item 8. to the forefront of the agenda:*

*8. Discussion on Downtown survey and map (per 11.24.2014 meeting discussion) including discussion of Certified Local Government (CLG) grant.*

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Gomez AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE ITEM 8. TO ITEM 1. ON THE AGENDA.*



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8. Discussion on Downtown survey and map (per 11.24.2014 meeting discussion) including discussion of Certified Local Government (CLG) grant.

Ms. Jessica Herrera, Redevelopment Manager, Economic & International Development Department, explained staff gave a formal presentation to the Downtown Management District (DMD) members, the Central Business Association and met one-on-one with various property owners; however, the City is still are not at a point where we are receiving support and the buy-in from the property owners. Ms. Herrera distributed copies of the Downtown Management District's "Position Statement" and stated that, as a Board, the Downtown Management District did not want to move forward with the grant at this time. Additionally, the City Manager decided staff would not be able to move forward and accept the grant awarded to the City from the Texas Historical Commission. It is important that the Downtown Management District, and other stakeholders critical to this effort, work together to change perceptions and rebuild trust between the stakeholders, the City of El Paso and the preservation community.

Chairman Helm was very disappointed staff was presenting this news to the commission today; furthermore, the only input staff received was the Downtown Management District membership. He asked staff if members of the community would have an opportunity to speak on the matter.

Ms. Herrera responded community outreach is very much needed; however, staff cannot move forward on accepting this grant at this time.

Mr. Joe Gudenrath, Executive Director, Downtown Management District, thanked Ms. Velázquez and Ms. Herrera for their diligent outreach efforts to the DMD and a number of other stakeholders. Personally, this is not only about the grant but more of an effort that needs to be undertaken and collaboration to get stakeholders and the preservation community on the same page. Currently, the atmosphere, environment and relationships are not where we need to be to move forward with this project. Mr. Gudenrath stated commissioners have his commitment to continue to provide the necessary outreach to the historic preservation community, property owners, and stakeholders to look at opportunities to work together for the betterment of the people of El Paso.

Chairman Helm stated the sad thing here is so many people within the historic preservation community, outside the Downtown Management District, have an interest as citizens of the community to protect and enhance redevelopment for historic buildings and have dedicated vast amounts of their time and effort to get us to this point. He felt denying this grant would have a detrimental effect on these individuals and at the Texas Historical Commission.



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Ms. Herrera felt the Historic Preservation Office within the Economic & International Development Department should provide the ammunition and approach to provide the tools to change those members of the community not in support of this effort. Furthermore, it is important that public outreach continue and trust and relationships strengthened. Ms. Herrera suggested a member of the Downtown Management District Board become a Historic Landmark Commissioner.

Chairman Helm noted there are several vacancies for individuals to become a Historic Landmark Commissioner. He felt this was a huge loss and explained qualifying for tax credits is very important in making preservation and rehabilitation projects profitable. To qualify for tax credit funds properties/structures must first be designated on the National Register of Historic Places. Tax credit funds are necessary to allow a preservation project to compete with a new construction project. The usual argument of the City Council is, rather than preserve historic buildings in the downtown, these structures are not economically viable to preserve and therefore permission for demolition permits are granted. Chairman Helm was deeply saddened staff had not invited the Historic Landmark Commissioners to assist in communicating matters related to the grant and subsequent survey.

Commissioner Lucero agreed with Chairman Helm in that not accepting this grant was a missed opportunity. She asked staff what the purpose was to continue holding community outreach meetings if the City would not accept the grant from the Texas Historical Commission. Commissioner Lucero's fear was if the City were to ask the Texas Historical Commission for another grant the request would be denied. Additionally, she feared historical structures in downtown El Paso would continue to be demolished.

Ms. Herrera agreed it would be most beneficial to include the Historic Landmark Commissioners in these community outreach meetings. As Mr. Gudenrath stated this is not only necessarily about the grant award, this is really also about the misconceptions, perceptions, relationships and distrust that exist amongst the entities and individuals. Ms. Herrera felt it necessary to convey to the DMD Board, the stakeholders/property owners, the preservation community and community at large of the importance of a national historic district designation and what impact this designation would have on El Paso. Ms. Herrera stated her biggest concern was establishing trust amongst these entities and individuals.

Per the Downtown Management District Position Statement, Commissioner Becker Skillern asked staff to clarify the following statement – *"The DMD supports the restoration of historic buildings, the establishment of tools and incentives to facilitate the restoration of historic buildings, and the gathering of information that would lead to the restoration of historic buildings."*

Economic & International Development

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Ms. Herrera explained the statement, as read into the record by the commissioner was approved by the Downtown Management District board; however, it is the City Manager's decision that the city not accept the grant at this time. Staff could have accepted the grant award without going to City Council had the amount been \$50,000.00 or less; unfortunately, the THC awarded the City of El Paso a \$56,000.00 grant.

Commissioner Cordova asked what the city will do and/or how will the city go about to change the mindset at the Downtown Management District.

Mr. Gudenrath explained the mindset has been changing over the past few months, the Downtown Management District did stop short from supporting the survey; however, they did recognize aspects of the grant that are positive. Initially, discussions with the DMD and others regarding the survey were not very well received; however, with the outreach meetings and with continued outreach meetings, that opinion is softening. Although today's discussion was regarding the survey, the focus should also include building trust and mutual respect.

Commissioner Gomez asked staff which city department will be providing the community outreach.

Ms. Herrera responded the Economic & International Department along with the Historic Preservation Office.

Commissioner Gomez requested the Economic & International Department staff present periodic updates to commissioners.

Ms. Herrera agreed. She felt it important to include commissioners in the preliminary planning sessions in order to submit a solid implementation plan for presentation to the community.

Chairman Helm felt including the commissioners would be greatly needed. Additionally, not accepting this grant the city is not accepting the efforts from numerous members of the community who were interested and volunteered their time, primarily members of the El Paso County Historical Commission.

In conclusion, Chairman Helm explained at the June 15<sup>th</sup> Historic Landmark Commission meeting, commissioners voted on and approved that the Chairman would compose a letter of support to be presented to Mayor and City Council, for the grant and the survey. Chairman Helm gave the letter of support to staff (copy of letter on file).

Ms. Hamilton explained commissioners would need to take action on the submittal of the letter to Mayor and Council as written. All commissioners had read previously read the letter.



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#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Becker Skillern, seconded by Commissioner Brock AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO PRESENT THE LETTER TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL*

#### 9. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for June 15, 2015

*Minutes were not available to review.*

#### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Lucero AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:19 P.M.*